

## Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CU-05 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 /039 W

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R 082000Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1177

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SANTO DOMINGO 3267

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC

SUBJECT: CARIBE-VISTA YOUTH SAFARI GROUP

1. FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS A GROUP OF ABOUT 38 AMERICANS HAVE BEEN LIVING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC UNDER A PROGRAM KNOWN AS CARIBE-VISTA YOUTH SAFARI. SHORTLY AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL LAST MAY, THE LEADER OF THE GROUP--NAMED TIMOTHY BLOSSOM--REQUESTED THE ASSISTANCE OF AN EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER IN OBTAINING PERMISSION FOR A MEMBER OF THE GROUP TO RETURN TO HAITI, WHERE THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN LIVING, IN ORDER TO TAKE CARE OF SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF THE GROUP. IN RESPONSE TO A MESSAGE CONVEYING THIS REQUEST, EMBASSY PORT-AU-PRINCE ADVISED THAT ON PETITION OF GORDON BLOSSOM (FATHER OF TIMOTHY) IT HAD ALREADY REQUESTED GOH PERMISSION FOR ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE GROUP--THE BUSINESS MANAGER--TO RETURN TO HAITI. (THIS PERMISSION WAS SUBSEQUENTLY GRANTED.) EMBASSY PORT-AU-PRINCE ADVISED FURTHER THAT THE GROUP HAD BEEN ACTIVE IN HAITI OVER 2 YEARS BUT HAD NEVER OBTAINED RECOGNITION, THOUGH THEY REPORTED THEY HAD ATTEMPTED TO DO SO SEVERAL TIMES. THE GROUP WAS EXPELLED FROM HAITI ON IMMIGRANT GROUNDS WITHOUT PREJUDICE FOR A NEW APPLICATION FOR ENTRY. OUR CONSULAR OFFICER WAS INFORMED AT THE TIME THAT THE GROUP WAS ADMITTED BY THE DOMINICAN AUTHORITIES FOR A PERIOD OF 60 DAYS. THE GROUP LEFT HAITI HURRIEDLY, WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION OTHER THAN A SWORN STATEMENT OF THE GROUP'S BUSINESS MANAGER THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP WERE AMERICAN CITIZENS.

2. THE EXISTENCE OF THE GROUP NEXT CAME TO OUR ATTENTION LAST

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WEEK WHEN A REPORTER FROM THE DETROIT FREE PRESS CALLED ON THE PAO, INDICATING THAT HE WAS LOOKING INTO ACTIVITIES OF THE

GROUP WITH THE AID OF WRITING A STORY ABOUT THEM, AND AN OFFICIAL OF AID WAS APPROACHED BY THE GROUP'S LEADER TO SEEK INFORMATION CONCERNING PROJECTS ON WHICH MEMBERS OF THE GROUP MIGHT ASSIST.

3. ACCORDING TO LITERATURE GIVEN TO AID BY MR. BLOSSOM, THE PROGRAM IS SPONSORED BY AN ORGANIZATION CALLED "NEW HORIZONS YOUTH MINISTRIES",

WITH HEADQUARTERS IN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN (ADDRESS 2720 44TH ST., S.E., TEL: 49508). ONE BROCHURE INDICATES THAT ITS PURPOSE IS "TO OFFER PARENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE THEIR CHILDREN WITH UNIQUE CULTURAL, SPIRITUAL AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT". ITS CONCEPT IS, "BROADENED PERSPECTIVES THROUGH CULTURE-SHOCK," DEFINED AS "A FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORIENTATION PRODUCED BY A SUDDEN AND COMPLETE CHANGE IN ONE'S CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT". WEEK DAY MORNINGS ARE TO BE DEVOTED TO SCHOOL WORK AND AFTERNOONS TO SERVICE, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES. ADMISSION CANDIDATES ARE "NORMAL BOYS AND GIRLS AGES 14-17 WHO ARE UNDER-ACHIEVING ACADEMICALLY, OR WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING OTHER ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES". ANOTHER BROCHURE STATES THAT THE CARIBE-VISTA YOUTH SAFARI IS ONE OF SEVERAL NEW MHYM PROGRAMS LAUNCHED "ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO AS AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT ENDEAVORING TO PROVIDE PROMISING AMERICAN YOUTH WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY OTHER CULTURES AND THUS MAKE PERSONAL VALUE DISCOVERIES WHICH WILL BENEFICAILLY AFFECT THEM THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES". "ULTIMATE PLANS ARE FOR STUDENTS TO STUDY THREE DISTINCT CULTURES DURING A 9 MONTH PERIOD..... COUNTRIES SELECTED ARE HAITI, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND BELIZE."

4. HOWEVER, FROM COMMENTS MADE BY THE REPORTER TO THE PAO AND BY THE GROUP'S LEADER TO THE AID OFFICIAL, IT APPEARS THAT THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROGRAM ARE YOUTHS WHO HAVE BECOME ALIENATED FROM THEIR PARENTS. ACCORDING TO THE REPORTER, THEY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE COURTS IN MICHIGAN, AND \$21 PER DAY ARE BEING PAID INTO THE PROGRAM FROM PUBLIC FUNDS. THE GROUP'S LEADER TOLD THE AID OFFICER THAT AMONG THE STAFF MEMBERS OF THE PROJECT--ABOUT 8 PERSONS--ARE A PSYCHIATRIST AND A SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR, AND THAT THE PARTICIPANTS ARE RECEIVING EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTION THROUGH CORRESPONDENCE MATERIALS. THE GROUP'S LEADER INDICATED THAT THEY ARE CURRENTLY ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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DOMINICAN PERMISSION TO INCORPORATE LEGALLY HERE. THEY HAVE BEEN STAYING AT CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE GROUNDS AT LA VEGA BUT INTEND TO SETTLE IN JARABACOA, ANOTHER SMALLER COMMUNITY OF THE LA VEGA REGION, AND ARE APPARENTLY NOW ATTEMPTING TO BECOME ASSOCIATED WITH SOME WORK PROJECTS.

5. THE EMBASSY HAS NO BASIS AT THIS TIME FOR QUESTIONING THE PROPRIETY OF THE ACTIVITIES OR STATUS OF THIS GROUP IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. HOWEVER, IN LIGHT OF THE DETROIT FREE PRESS REPORTER'S QUERIES AND COMMENTS IMPLYING THAT HE IS ON TO

SOMETHING THAT WOULD MAKE A GOOD STORY, WE BELIEVE IT  
WOULD BE PRUDENT TO ACQUIRE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BACKGROUND  
OF THE PROGRAM AND THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION. THE EMBASSY  
WOULD BE APPRECIATIVE THEREFORE IF DEPT. WOULD OBTAIN, AND  
ADVISE THE EMBASSY OF, WHATEVER SUCH INFORMATION IT CAN OBTAIN.  
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